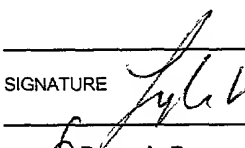


FORM PTO-1390 (Modified) (REV 5-93)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 017700-0149	
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371					
		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.55) Unassigned		09/869701	
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/JP00/07711		INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE November 1, 2000		PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED November 4, 1999	
TITLE OF INVENTION METHOD OF MANUFACTURING OXIDE SUPERCONDUCTING WIRE, OXIDE SUPERCONDUCTING WIRE, SUPERCONDUCTING COIL AND SUPERCONDUCTING APPARATUS					
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Naoki AYAI, Ryosuke HATA, Hiromi TAKEI, Kazuhiko HAYASHI and Takeshi HIKATA					
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:					
1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.			
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.			
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).			
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19 th month from the earliest claimed priority date.			
5.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	has been transmitted by the International Bureau.			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US)			
6.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).			
7.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	have been transmitted by the International Bureau.			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	have not been made and will not be made.			
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).			
9.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).			
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).			
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Applicant claims small entity status under 37 CFR 1.27.			
Items 12. to 17. below concern other document(s) or information included:					
12.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.			
13.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.			
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A FIRST preliminary amendment.			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.			
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A substitute specification.			
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.			
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other items or information:			

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (if known, see 37 CFR 1.55) Unassigned 09/869701		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/JP00/07711		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 017700-0149	
18. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted:				CALCULATIONS	
Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5): Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO.....\$860.00					
International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482).....\$690.00					
No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)).....\$710.00					
Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor International search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO.....\$1,000.00					
International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4).....\$100.00					
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =				\$860.00	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than 20 Months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e))					
Claims	Number Filed	Included in Basic Fee	Extra Claims	Rate	
Total Claims	28	- 20	= 8	x	\$18.00
Independent Claims	4	- 3	= 1	x	\$80.00
Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)				\$270.00	
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$1084.00	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable.				\$0.00	
SUBTOTAL =				\$1084.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing English translation later the 20 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).				+	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =				\$1084.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property +				\$40.00	
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =				\$1124.00	
				Amount to be: refunded \$	
				charged \$	
a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$1124.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.					
b. <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. 19-0741 in the amount of \$0.00 to the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.					
c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.					
NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.					
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:					
Foley & Lardner Washington Harbour 3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20007-5109			SIGNATURE  LYLE KIMMS REG. NO. 34079 NAME DAVID A. BLUMENTHAL REGISTRATION NUMBER 26,257		

6/PR 73

09/869701

JC18 Rec'd PCT/PTO 03 JUL 2001

DESCRIPTION

Method of Manufacturing Oxide Superconducting Wire, Oxide Superconducting Wire, Superconducting Coil and Superconducting Apparatus

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire, an oxide superconducting wire, a superconducting coil and a superconducting apparatus, and more particularly, it relates to superconducting apparatuses such as a superconducting transformer, a superconducting current limiter and a magnetic field generator employing superconducting magnets prepared from oxide superconducting wires, a superconducting cable and a superconducting bus bar employing oxide superconducting wires and the like and a method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire applicable for manufacturing these superconducting apparatuses.

Background Technique

In general, a sufficient length is required to an oxide superconducting wire employed in a practical superconducting apparatus. In order to manufacture a cable conductor having a capacity of at least 100 MW as a practical superconducting cable, for example, hundreds of oxide superconducting wires exhibiting a unit length of about 5 km as the final length of the superconducting cable are required. In this case, a wire (diameter: 0.9 mm, critical current: 20 A, temperature: 77 K) formed by bismuth oxide superconductor filaments coated with silver is employed as the oxide superconducting wire, for example.

As a superconducting magnet employed for a magnetic separator or a magnetic field generator, a magnet having an inner diameter exceeding 1 m is manufactured. In order to manufacture such a superconducting magnet, about 1000 oxide superconducting wires exhibiting a unit length of about 800 m per coil are required, for example. In this case, a tape-like wire

(thickness: 0.25 mm, width: 4 mm, critical current: 50 A (temperature: 77 K)) formed by bismuth oxide superconductor filaments coated with silver is employed as the oxide superconducting wire.

At the current level of the technique of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire, however, only a wire formed by bismuth oxide superconductor filaments coated with silver having a unit length of about several 100 m is manufactured. When the oxide superconducting wire of such a unit length has a single defective portion, the entire oxide superconducting wire of about several 100 m is regarded as defective, to disadvantageously result in a low manufacturing yield. Unless a technique of manufacturing an elongated oxide superconducting wire is developed, therefore, it is impossible at present to apply the current technique to the aforementioned practical superconducting apparatus. This is one of primary factors for delay in application of the superconducting apparatus, which is an innovative technique, to industry and practical application thereof.

If a wire having a large unit length can be manufactured by connecting relatively short oxide superconducting wires with each other in order to implement the aforementioned superconducting cable having a capacity of at least 100 MW or a superconducting magnet employed for a magnetic field generator, it is possible to prepare a prototype apparatus for applying a superconducting apparatus to industry. Further, it is possible to grasp merits of the superconducting apparatus through the prepared prototype apparatus for progressing practical application.

However, the critical current of an oxide superconducting wire is disadvantageously reduced due to influence by strain resulting from deformation such as bending or tension. When end portions of oxide superconducting wires having a small unit length are superposed for connecting the oxide superconducting wires with each other by brazing or soldering, for example, the wires are bent through a guide roller or the like in the process of manufacturing a superconducting cable or a superconducting magnet and the critical current is reduced due to bending strain applied to the wires. This is because the junction formed by

superposing the end portions with each other is hardly bent while the remaining portions are readily bent and hence an end of the junction is bent with a bend radius smaller than the radius of the guide roller or the like when the end of the junction is bent through the guide roller or the like and strain larger than allowable bending strain allowing the wires to maintain the critical current is applied to the end of the junction to readily cause concentration of strain. Even if an oxide superconducting wire having a large unit length can be obtained by connecting the wires, therefore, the critical current is reduced due to influence by the strain applied to the end of the junction of the wire and hence it is disadvantageously difficult for a practical superconducting apparatus formed by the long wire to attain a prescribed function.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire which can manufacture the longest possible wire by connecting relatively short wires with each other and is capable of suppressing reduction of a critical current resulting from influence by strain also when the wire is bent after connection.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an oxide superconducting wire, a superconducting coil and a superconducting apparatus each comprising a connected portion, which can suppress reduction of an initial critical current of wires before connection also in a bent state.

Disclosure of the Invention

A method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to an aspect of the present invention comprises a step of bonding end portions of two oxide superconducting wires by superposing the end portions with each other for connecting the oxide superconducting wires with each other and a step of working a junction formed by superposing the end portions with each other to reduce the quantity of strain on an end of the junction to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of the oxide superconducting wires when the two oxide superconducting wires connected with each other are bent.

When the junction is worked in the aforementioned manner, reduction of a critical current caused by bending strain can be suppressed also when the wire is bent through a guide roller or the like after connection. Therefore, an oxide superconducting wire having a length
5 necessary for various superconducting apparatuses can be prepared by connecting relatively short oxide superconducting wires. Also when such a long oxide superconducting wire is left in a state wound on a reel or the like, reduction of the critical current caused by applied strain is suppressed. Therefore, a long superconducting cable or a large superconducting magnet
10 can be manufactured by continuously supplying the prepared long oxide superconducting wire while simultaneously performing insulating coating on the wire.

In the method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to the present invention, the step of bonding the aforementioned
15 oxide superconducting wires is preferably carried out by superposing the end portions of the two oxide superconducting wires with each other with interposition of a brazing filler metal.

The oxide superconducting wires are preferably tape-like wires having rectangular cross sections.

The step of bonding the aforementioned oxide superconducting wires is preferably carried out by superposing wide surfaces of two tape-like
20 wires with each other. The aforementioned step of working the aforementioned junction is preferably carried out by working the end portions so that the widths of the tape-like members are reduced toward
25 the ends.

The step of working the aforementioned junction is preferably carried out by cutting the end portions to have V shapes in plane or by cutting the end portions so that the end portions have end surfaces inclined
in the width direction across the widths of the tape-like wires.

30 The step of working the aforementioned junction is preferably carried out by working the end portions so that the thicknesses of the tape-like wires are reduced toward the ends.

The oxide superconducting wires may be round wires.

Further, the step of working the aforementioned junction is preferably carried out by at least partially coating the junction with a metal or an organic substance thereby reducing the aforementioned quantity of strain. In this case, the step of working the aforementioned junction is preferably carried out by at least partially inserting the junction into a material having an annular shape.

The oxide superconducting wire to which the manufacturing method according to the present invention is applied preferably contains a bismuth oxide superconductor. When the bismuth oxide superconductor is employed, the wire is preferably formed by bismuth oxide superconductor filaments coated with a material containing silver.

An oxide superconducting wire according to another aspect of the present invention comprises a first oxide superconducting wire having an end portion, a second oxide superconducting wire having an end portion and a junction formed by superposing the end portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires with each other, and the quantity of strain on an end of the junction is reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires.

When the oxide superconducting wire having the aforementioned structure is employed, reduction of initial critical currents of the wires before connection can be suppressed also when the wires are bent through a guide roller or the like in the process of manufacturing a superconducting cable or a superconducting magnet. Therefore, reduction of a yield can be suppressed when manufacturing a final superconducting cable or superconducting magnet by employing the oxide superconducting wire according to the present invention, while a long superconducting cable or a large superconducting magnet can be manufactured with high productivity.

In the oxide superconducting wire according to the present invention, the junction preferably includes a brazing filler metal interposed between the superposed end portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires.

The oxide superconducting wires are preferably tape-like wires

having rectangular cross sections.

The junction preferably includes a junction formed by superposing wide surfaces of two tape-like wires. The junction preferably includes an end portion so worked that the widths of the tape-like wires are reduced toward the end.

Further, the junction preferably includes an end portion having a V shape in plane or an end portion having an end surface inclined in the width direction across the widths of the tape-like wires.

The junction preferably includes an end portion so worked that the thicknesses of the tape-like wires are reduced toward the end.

The oxide superconducting wires may be round wires.

Further, the junction is preferably at least partially coated with a metal or an organic substance. In this case, the junction is preferably at least partially inserted into a material having an annular shape.

The oxide superconducting wires preferably contain a bismuth oxide superconductor. The bismuth oxide superconductor is preferably a filament coated with a material containing silver.

A superconducting coil according to still another aspect of the present invention comprises a first oxide superconducting wire having an end portion, a second oxide superconducting wire having an end portion and a junction formed by superposing the end portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires with each other, and the quantity of strain on an end of the junction is reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires.

A superconducting apparatus according to a further aspect of the present invention comprises a first oxide superconducting wire having an end portion, a second oxide superconducting wire having an end portion and a junction formed by superposing the end portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires with each other, and the quantity of strain on an end of the junction is reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of the first and second oxide superconducting wires.

According to the present invention, as hereinabove described, the longest possible wire can be manufactured by connecting short wires while reduction of a critical current resulting from influence by bending strain can be effectively suppressed by working the junction to reduce the quantity of strain on the end of the junction when the connected oxide superconducting wires are bent. Therefore, a long oxide superconducting wire used for a long superconducting cable or a large superconducting magnet can be previously prepared in a state suppressing reduction of the critical current. Thus, the oxide superconducting wire can be manufactured with high productivity without reducing a manufacturing yield. Consequently, the oxide superconducting wire or the superconducting coil according to the present invention can be applied to various superconducting apparatuses for readily progressing practical application.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (1) of a method or a mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (7) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (7) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (8) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 5 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (9) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 6 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (10) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide

superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 7 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (11) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

5 Fig. 8 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (12) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

10 Fig. 9 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (13) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 10 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (17) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

15 Fig. 11 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (18) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 12 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (20) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

20 Fig. 13 is a longitudinal sectional view schematically showing an embodiment (21) of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

Fig. 14 is a diagram conceptually showing an apparatus for performing a bending strain test of connectional wires in Examples 1 and 2.

25 Fig. 15 illustrates the relation between the ratio I_c/I_{c0} between a critical current I_c and an initial critical current I_{c0} of each connectional wire after the bending strain test in Example 2 and the total number of pulleys passed by each connectional wire in the bending strain test.

30 Fig. 16 illustrates current (I)-voltage (E) characteristics measured as to a connectional wire d in Example 2.

Best Modes for Carrying Out the Invention

The following various embodiments can be listed as the method or

the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention. The respective embodiments are now described with reference to drawings.

Figs. 1, 4 and 6 to 12 are longitudinal sectional views schematically showing various embodiments of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention. Figs. 2, 3, 5 and 13 are plan views schematically showing various embodiments of the method or the mode of connecting oxide superconducting wires according to the present invention.

(1) As shown in Fig. 1, end portions of tape-like or round bismuth oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 are superposed and bonded with each other. A brazing filler metal 3 consisting of a material such as lead-tin alloy solder containing silver is arranged between the end portions of the oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2. Thus, the two oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 are connected with each other. According to this embodiment, the length of a junction L is set to at least one time and not more than 100 times the diameter or the width of the oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of the wires when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(2) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 1, wide surfaces of the oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 having rectangular cross sections are superposed to be bonded with each other. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction is reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(3) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 1, the thickness t of the brazing filler metal 3 is set to be at least 0.01 times and not more than one time the diameter D or the thickness T of the oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(4) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 1, the ribbon-like brazing filler metal 3 is held between the end portions of the oxide superconducting

wires 1 and 2 having rectangular cross sections and heated thereby bonding the oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 to each other.

(5) End portions of round oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 are twisted and superposed, and bonded with each other with interposition of a brazing filler metal 3 therebetween.

(6) The oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 are bonded to each other so that the pitch of the aforementioned twisting is at least one time and not more than 10 times the diameter of the wires 1 and 2.

(7) As shown in Fig. 2 or 3, an end portion 11a or 11b of an oxide superconducting wire 1 is so worked that the diameter D (in the case of a round wire) or the width W (in the case of a tape-like wire) is reduced toward the end in a plane shape. An end portion 21a or 21b of another oxide superconducting wire 2 is also worked similarly to the above. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of a junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

In the connection mode shown in Fig. 2, the ends of the wires are so cut that the end portions 11a and 21a have V shapes in the case of the tape-like wire. In the connection mode shown in Fig. 3, the ends of the wires are so cut that the end portions 11b and 21b have end surfaces inclined in the width direction across the widths of the tape-like wires in the case of the tape-like wires.

(8) As shown in Fig. 4, an end portion 12 of an oxide superconducting wire 1 and an end portion 22 of another oxide superconducting wire 2 are so worked that the thickness T of the wires is reduced toward the ends. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of a junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(9) As shown in Fig. 5, notches are formed on an end portion 13 of an oxide superconducting wire 1 and an end portion 23 of another oxide superconducting wire 2. The diameter (in the case of round wires) or the width (in the case of tape-like wires) of the notches is increased toward the ends. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of a junction is reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(10) As shown in Fig. 6, a brazing filler metal 3 is arranged partially

along superposed end portions of oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 while defining spaces 31 and 32. When a junction is bent in the mode shown in Fig. 6, the end portion of one of the wires pushes back the surface of the other wire in each of the spaces 31 and 32 thereby relaxing concentration of strain. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction is reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(11) As shown in Fig. 7, a junction between ends of oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 is partially coated with flexible materials 41.

(12) As shown in Fig. 8, a junction between ends of oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 is entirely coated with flexible materials 41.

Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(13) As shown in Fig. 9, a junction between oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 is partially or entirely coated with tape-like materials 41 consisting of polyimide, copper, silver or the like.

(14) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 7 or 8, materials 41 of polyvinyl formal (PVF) resin or epoxy resin are employed. In this case, the aforementioned organic substance is partially or entirely applied to the junction and dried thereby partially or entirely coating the junction.

(15) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 9, metal tapes are employed as the materials 42 and the metal tapes are entirely or partially brazed to the junction thereby forming coatings.

(16) In the connection mode shown in Fig. 7 or 8, brazing filler metals are employed as the materials 41 and partially or entirely brazed to the junction thereby forming coatings. In this case, it is preferable to employ solder consisting of a lead-tin alloy containing silver having a high melting point as the material for the brazing filler metal 3, and to employ indium-based solder having a low melting point as the materials 41 forming the coatings. Thus, the junction can be coated with the materials 41 consisting of solder having a relatively low melting point after bonding the wires 1 and 2 with each other through the brazing filler metal 3.

(17) As shown in Fig. 10, a junction between oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 is inserted into a material 43 having an annular shape to be

entirely coated, and subjected to shrinkage fitting thereby forming a coating. Alternatively, a material 43 consisting of an organic substance having an annular shape coating the junction in place of a metal may be employed and shrunk by heating thereby forming a coating. A heat-shrinkable tube may be employed as the material 43 having an annular shape.

(18) As shown in Fig. 11, a junction may be partially inserted into materials 44 consisting of a metal or an organic substance having annular shapes to be partially coated, and subjected to shrinkage fitting or heat-shrinking to be formed with coatings.

When the junction is partially or entirely coated as described above, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(19) In each of the connection modes described in the above items (11) to (18), the junction may be first partially or entirely coated with a material consisting of a metal, so that a material consisting of an organic substance is thereafter arranged thereon for forming a coating.

(20) As shown in Fig. 12, an end of a wire is coated with a material 45 consisting of a metal or an organic substance in a junction between oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2. In this case, the thickness of the material 45 forming a coating is set to be reduced as separated from the junction. Thus, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(21) As shown in Fig. 13, the width of a material 46 consisting of a metal or an organic substance coating an end of a wire on a junction between oxide superconducting wires 1 and 2 is set to be narrowed as separated from the junction. Also in this case, the quantity of strain on an end of the junction can be reduced when the wires connected with each other are bent.

(Example 1)

Three connectional wires were prepared by connecting bismuth-based (Bi(Pb)-Sr-Ca-Cu-O-based) oxide superconducting wires with solder consisting of a lead-tin alloy containing silver. Each wire was prepared

from a tape-like wire obtained by coating 61 bismuth-based oxide superconductor filaments with a silver alloy sheath containing 0.3 percent by weight of manganese. The tape-like wire was 0.24 mm in thickness, 3.8 mm in width and 300 mm in length. The length L (see Fig. 1) of a junction
5 between such wires was 100 mm. A voltage defined as 1 μ V/cm was applied to each of the three connectional wires with an inter-terminal distance of 200 mm including the junction for measuring a critical current I_c , which was 55 A in each connectional wire.

The three connectional wires were worked as follows:

10 (a) Connectional Wire a

Not worked but left in the connection mode shown in Fig. 1.

(b) Connectional Wire b

Coatings 41 were formed by applying polyvinyl formal (PVF) resin to entirely coat the junction of the connectional wire and drying the same as
15 shown in Fig. 7.

(c) Connectional Wire c

Polyimide tapes 42 were bonded to coat the junction as shown in Fig.
9.

A test of applying bending strain to each of the aforementioned
20 connectional wires a, b and c was executed. The bending strain test was performed by alternately bringing a surface and an opposite surface of the connectional wire into contact with outer peripheral areas of guide rollers (pulleys) of 180 mm in outer diameter over a central angle of about 180° and moving the same by five turns respectively in a state longitudinally
25 applying tension 5N to the connectional wire, as shown in Fig. 14. Thus, the bending strain test was performed on the assumption of conditions close to those of an actual winding step passed through a number of pulleys, in order to verify mechanical strength of the connected portion. After the bending strain test, the critical current I_c was measured as to each of the
30 connectional wires a, b and c. Consequently, the connectional wire a exhibited a value 30 A lower than an initial critical current 55 A while the connectional wire b and the connectional wire c exhibited high critical currents 48 A and 50 A respectively, and such results were obtained that

the critical currents can be maintained at high ratios with respect to initial critical currents.

(Example 2)

Four connectional wires were prepared by connecting bismuth-based (Bi(Pb)-Sr-Ca-Cu-O-based) oxide superconducting wires with solder consisting of a lead-tin alloy containing silver. Each wire was prepared from a tape-like wire obtained by coating 61 bismuth-based oxide superconductor filaments with a silver alloy sheath containing 0.3 percent by weight of manganese. Wide surfaces of such tape-like wires were superposed to be bonded with each other. The tape-like wire was 0.24 mm in thickness, 3.8 mm in width and 300 mm in length. The length L (see Fig. 1) of a junction between such wires was 50 mm. Voltage application terminals were mounted about the junction at an inter-terminal distance of 100 mm for applying a voltage defined as 1 μ V/cm to each of the four connectional wires from these voltage application terminals and measuring a critical current I_{c0} (initial critical current), which was 60 A in each connectional wire.

These four connectional wires were worked as follows:

(d) Connectional Wire d

Ends of two tape-like wires were cut (V-cut) into V shapes as shown in Fig. 2 and wide surfaces of the tape-like wires were superposed and bonded with each other, while lengths L_a and L_b were set to 40 mm and 5 mm respectively.

(e) Connectional Wire e

Ends of two tape-like wires were cut (N-cut) so that the ends had end surfaces inclined along the width direction across the widths of the tape-like wires as shown in Fig. 3 and wide surfaces of the tape-like wires were superposed and bonded with each other, while lengths L_a and L_b were set to 40 mm and 5 mm respectively.

(f) Connectional Wire f

Wide surfaces of two tape-like wires were superposed and bonded with each other without cutting ends of the tape-like wires as shown in Fig. 10, thereafter the junction (length L: 50 mm) was inserted into a heat-

shrinkable tube having a length L_c of 60 mm and a thickness of 0.15 mm before shrinkage to be entirely coated, and the tube was shrunk by heating at about 100°C for forming a coating. Electron-bridged soft flame-retarded polyolefin resin was employed as the material for the heat-shrinkable tube.

5 (g) Connectional Wire g

Not worked but left in the connection mode shown in Fig. 1.

A test of applying bending strain to each of the aforementioned connectional wires d, e, f and g was executed. The bending strain test was performed by alternately bringing a surface and an opposite surface of the connectional wire into contact with outer peripheral areas of guide rollers (pulleys) of 200 mm in outer diameter over a central angle of about 180° and moving the connectional wire to pass through the guide rollers in a state longitudinally applying tension 5N to the connectional wire, as shown in Fig. 14. Thus, the bending strain test was performed on the assumption of conditions close to those of an actual winding step passed through a number of pulleys, in order to verify mechanical strength of the connected portion. After the bending strain test, the critical current I_c was measured as to each of the connectional wires d, e, f and g.

Fig. 15 shows the relation between the ratio I_c/I_{c0} of the critical current I_c to the initial critical current I_{c0} of each connectional wire after the bending strain test and the total number of the pulleys passed by each connectional wire in the bending strain test. It is understood from Fig. 15 that the ratios of reduction of the critical currents I_c after the bending strain test were smaller in the connectional wires d, e and f having worked junctions as compared with the connectional wire g having a non-worked junction.

Fig. 16 shows current (I)-voltage (E) characteristics measured as to the connectional wire d. Referring to Fig. 16, a curve "not bent" shows data of the connectional wire d not subjected to bending strain, and curves "500 g, $\phi 200 \times 10$ times", "500 g, $\phi 200 \times 20$ times" and "500 g, $\phi 200 \times 30$ times" show data of the connectional wire d passed through the guide rollers of 200 mm in outer diameter 10 times, 20 times and 30 times respectively with application of a load of 500 g to be subjected to tensile

bending strain. Referring to Fig. 16, inclination of the current-voltage characteristic curves with reference to a current I of 0 to 40 A shows connection resistance of the wire. It is understood from Fig. 16 that the inclination remains substantially unchanged in each curve and hence
5 constant connection resistance was maintained also after application of the tensile bending strain and the connection resistance as well as the critical current I_c were hardly deteriorated. It is also understood that the connection resistance was about 20 n Ω .

Embodiments and Examples disclosed above are illustratively shown
10 in all points, and to be considered as not restrictive. The scope of the present invention is shown not by the aforementioned embodiments and Examples but by the scope of claim for patent, and to be interpreted as including all exemplary corrections and modifications within the meaning and range equivalent to the scope of claim for patent.

15 Industrial Applicability

The oxide superconducting wire or the superconducting coil according to the present invention is suitably employed for superconducting apparatuses such as a superconducting transformer, a superconducting
20 current limiter and a magnetic field generator employing superconducting magnets. Further, the oxide superconducting wire according to the present invention is suitably employed for superconducting apparatuses such as a superconducting cable and a superconducting bus bar. In addition, the method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire
25 according to the present invention is applicable for manufacturing these superconducting apparatuses.

CLAIMS

1. A method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire comprising the step of:

5 bonding end portions of two oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) by superposing the end portions with each other for connecting the oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other; and

10 working a junction (L) formed by superposing said end portions with each other to reduce the quantity of strain on an end of said junction to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) when said two oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) connected with each other are bent.

15 2. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 1, wherein said step of bonding said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) includes an operation of superposing the end portions of said two oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other with interposition of a brazing filler metal (3) thereby bonding the end portions.

20 3. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 2, wherein said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) are tape-like wires having rectangular cross sections.

25 4. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 3, wherein said step of bonding said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) includes an operation of superposing wide surfaces of two said tape-like wires with each other thereby bonding the wide surfaces.

5. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 4, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of working (11a, 11b, 21a, 21b) said end portions so that the widths (W) of said tape-like wires are reduced toward the ends.

30 6. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 5, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of cutting said end portions to have V shapes (11a, 21a) in plane.

7. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 5, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of cutting said end portions so that said end portions have end surfaces (11b, 21b) inclined in the width direction across the widths of said tape-like wires.

8. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 4, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of working (12, 22) said end portions so that the thicknesses (T) of said tape-like wires are reduced toward the ends.

9. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 2, wherein said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) are round wires.

10. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 2, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of at least partially coating said junction (L) with a metal or an organic substance (41, 42, 43, 44) thereby reducing said quantity of strain.

11. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 10, wherein said step of working said junction (L) includes an operation of at least partially inserting said junction (L) into a material (43, 44) having an annular shape.

12. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 1, wherein said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) contain a bismuth oxide superconductor.

13. The method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire according to claim 12, wherein said bismuth oxide superconductor is a filament coated with a material containing silver.

14. An oxide superconducting wire comprising:
a first oxide superconducting wire (1) having an end portion;
a second oxide superconducting wire (2) having an end portion; and
a junction (L) formed by superposing the end portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other, wherein the quantity of strain on an end of said junction (L) is reduced to be

close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2).

15. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 14, wherein said junction (L) includes a brazing filler metal (3) interposed between superposed said end portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2).

16. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 15, wherein said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) are tape-like wires having rectangular cross sections.

17. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 16, wherein said junction (L) includes a junction formed by superposing wide surfaces of two said tape-like wires.

18. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 17, wherein said junction (L) includes an end portion (11a, 11b, 21a, 21b) so worked that the widths (W) of said tape-like wires are reduced toward the end.

19. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 18, wherein said junction (L) includes an end portion having a V shape (11a, 21a) in plane.

20. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 18, wherein said junction (L) includes an end portion (11b, 21b) having an end surface inclined in the width direction across the widths of said tape-like wires.

21. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 17, wherein said junction (L) includes an end portion (12, 22) so worked that the thicknesses (T) of said tape-like wires are reduced toward the end.

22. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 15, wherein said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) are round wires.

23. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 15, wherein said junction (L) is at least partially coated with a metal or an organic substance (41, 42, 43, 44).

24. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 23, wherein said junction (L) is at least partially inserted into a material (43, 44) having an annular shape.

25. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 14, wherein

said oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) contain a bismuth oxide superconductor.

26. The oxide superconducting wire according to claim 25, wherein said bismuth oxide superconductor is a filament coated with a material containing silver.

27. A superconducting coil comprising:
a first oxide superconducting wire (1) having an end portion;
a second oxide superconducting wire (2) having an end portion; and
a junction (L) formed by superposing the end portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other, wherein the quantity of strain on an end of said junction (L) is reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2).

28. A superconducting apparatus comprising:
a first oxide superconducting wire (1) having an end portion;
a second oxide superconducting wire (2) having an end portion; and
a junction (L) formed by superposing the end portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other, wherein the quantity of strain on an end of said junction (L) is reduced to be close to the quantity of strain on non-superposed portions of said first and second oxide superconducting wires (1, 2).

ABSTRACT

5 A method of manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire which can
manufacture the longest possible wire by connecting relatively short wires
with each other and is capable of suppressing reduction of a critical current
resulting from influence by strain when the wires connected with each
other are bent, an oxide superconducting wire, a superconducting coil and a
superconducting apparatus are provided. According to the method of
manufacturing an oxide superconducting wire by superposing end portions
10 of two oxide superconducting wires (1, 2) with each other thereby bonding
the end portions and connecting the oxide superconducting wires with each
other, a junction (L) formed by superposing the end portions with each
other is so worked as to reduce the quantity of strain on an end of the
junction (L) when the two oxide superconducting wires (1) and (2)
15 connected with each other are bent. Each of the oxide superconducting
wire, the superconducting coil and the superconducting apparatus has the
aforementioned junction (L), and the quantity of strain on the end of the
junction (L) is reduced in the aforementioned manner.

FIG.1

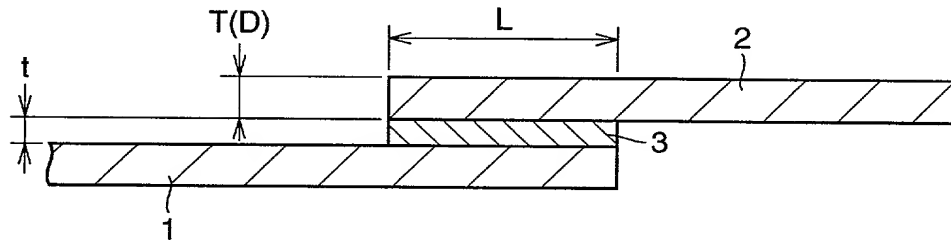


FIG.2

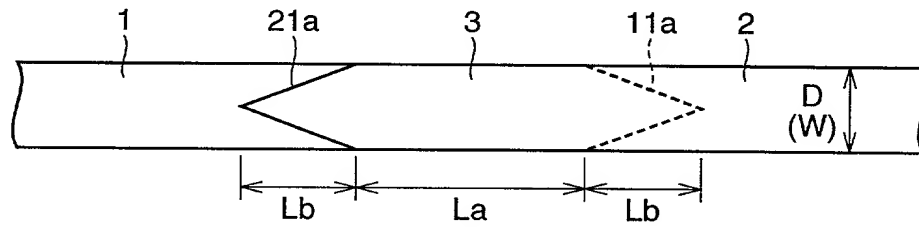


FIG.3

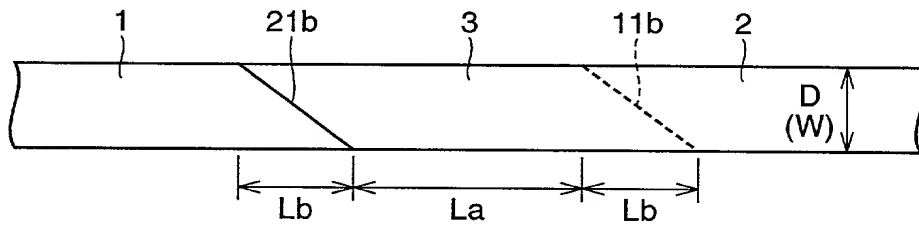


FIG.4

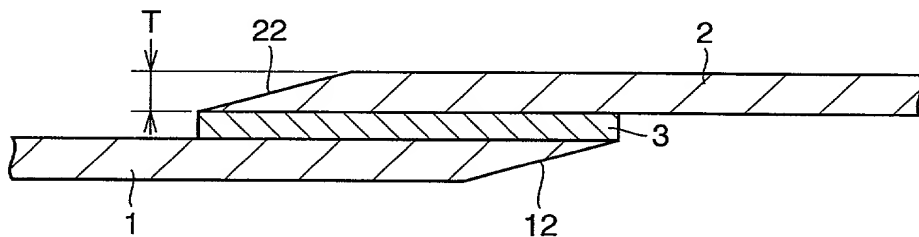


FIG.5

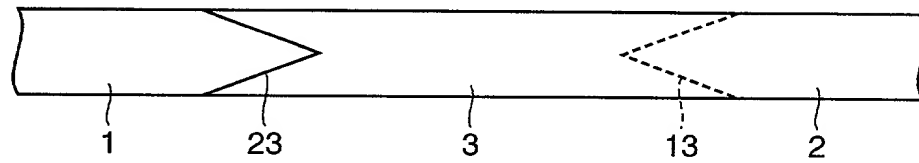


FIG.6

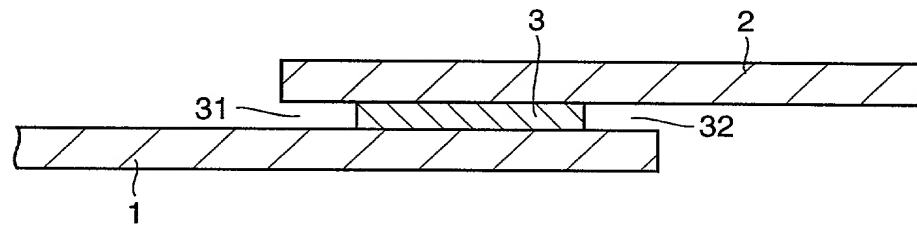


FIG.7

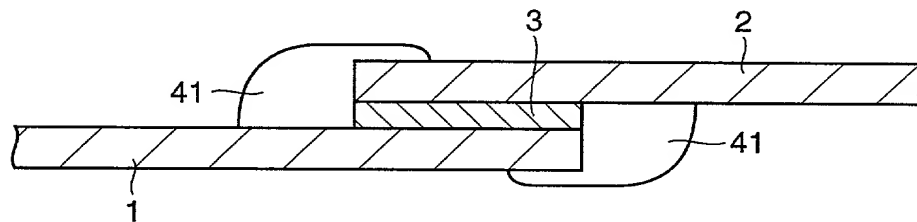


FIG.8

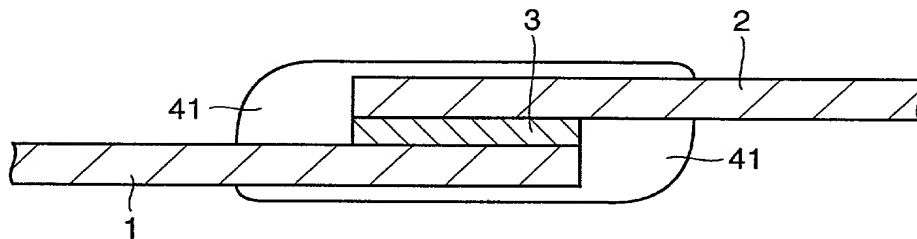


FIG.9

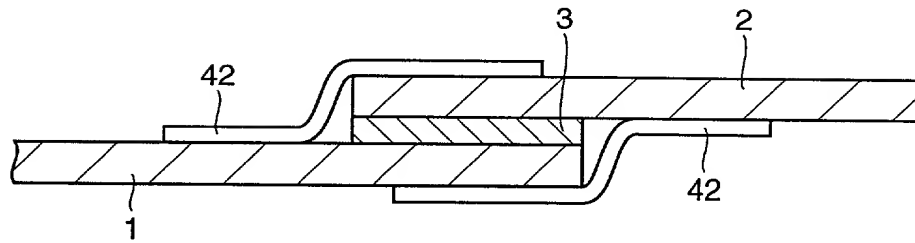


FIG.10

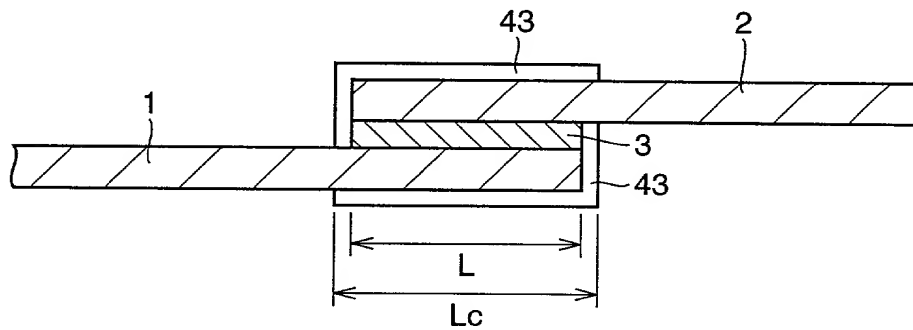


FIG.11

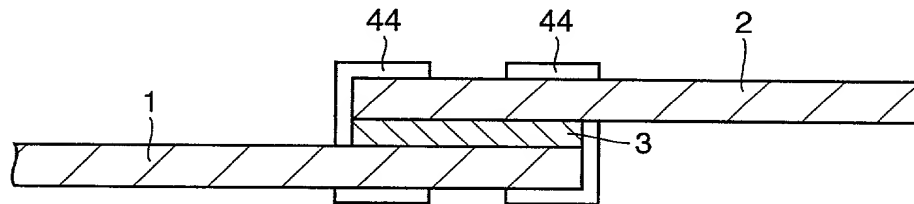


FIG.12

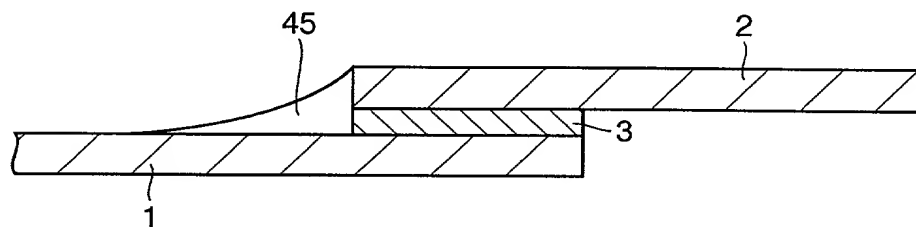


FIG.13

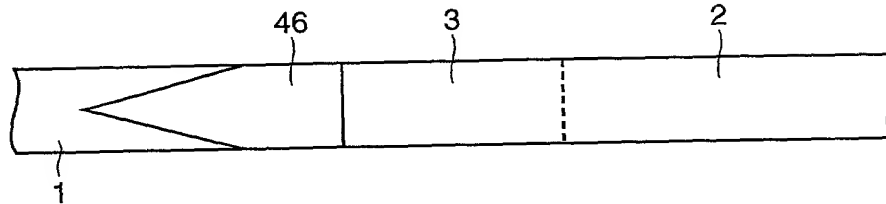


FIG.14

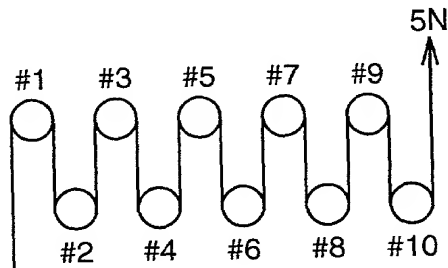


FIG.15

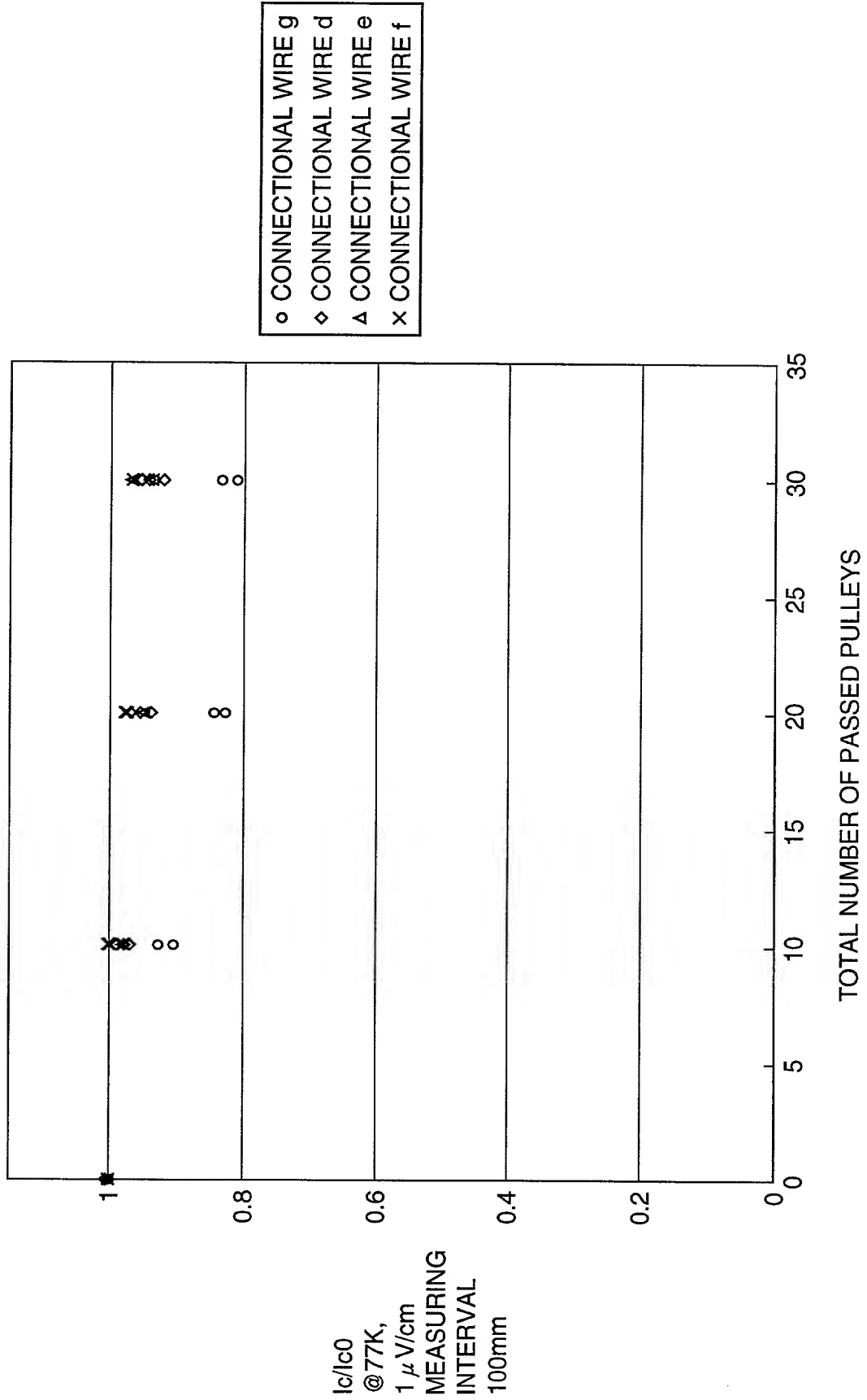
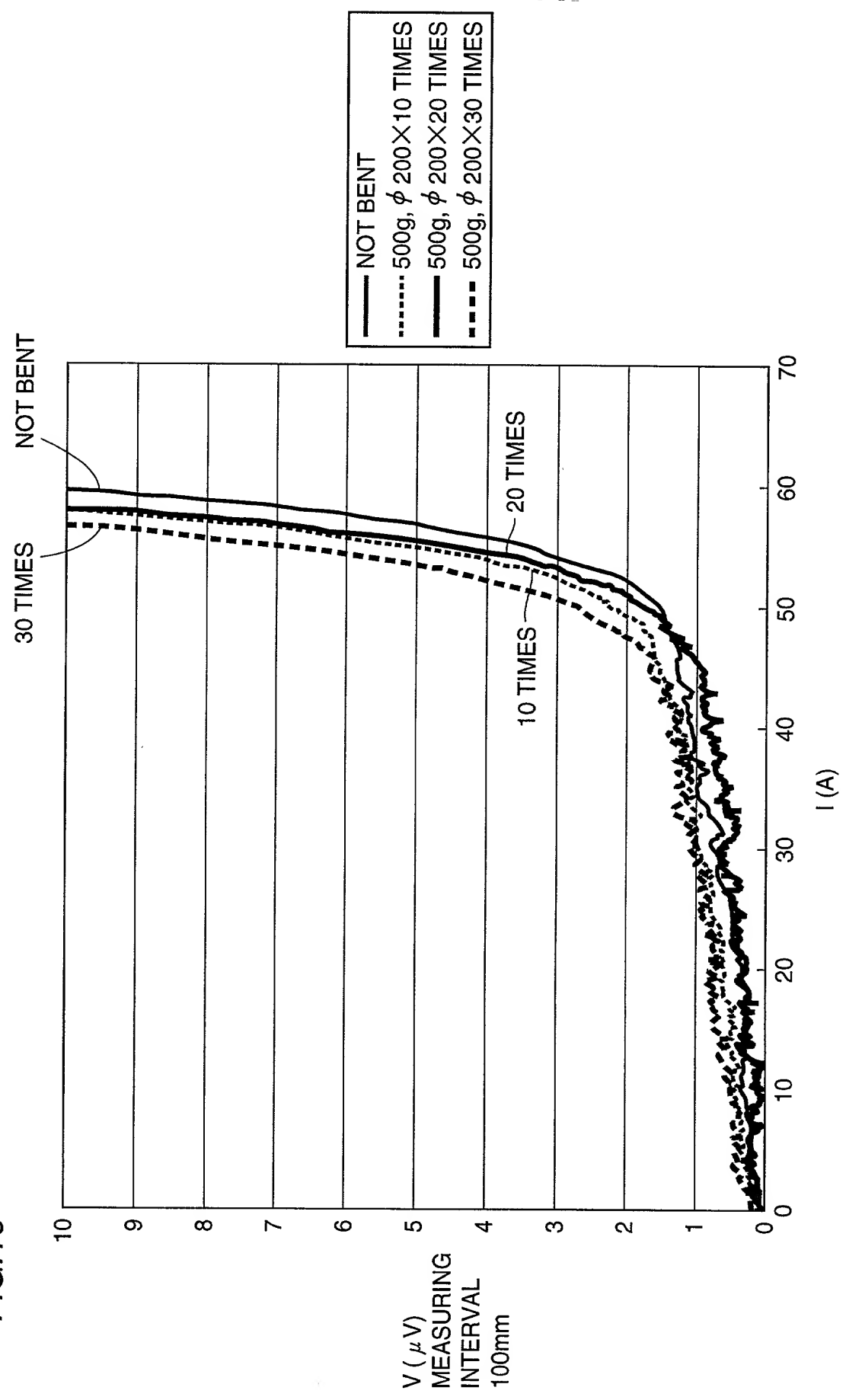


FIG.16



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

Method of Manufacturing Oxide Superconducting Wire, Oxide Superconducting Wire,
Superconducting Coil and Superconducting Apparatus
the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on November 1, 2000 as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number PCT/JP00/07711 and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known by me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

NUMBER	COUNTRY	DAY/MONTH/YEAR FILED	PRIORITY CLAIMED
11-314315 Pat.	Japan	4/November/1999	yes

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known by me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

APPLICATION SERIAL NO.	FILING DATE	STATUS: PATENTED, PENDING, ABANDONED

18 I hereby appoint as my attorneys, with full powers of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: Stephen A. Bent, Reg. No. 29,768; David A. Blumenthal, Reg. No. 26,257; William T. Ellis, Reg. No. 26,874; John J. Feldhaus, Reg. No. 28,822; Patricia D. Granados, Reg. No. 33,683; John P. Isacson, Reg. No. 33,715; Donald D. Jeffery, Reg. No. 19,980; Eugene M. Lee, Reg. No. 32,039; Peter G. Mack, Reg. No. 26,001; Brian J. McNamara, Reg. No. 32,789; Sybil Meloy, Reg. No. 22,749; George E. Quillin, Reg. No. 32,792; Colin G. Sandercock, Reg. No. 31,298; Bernhard D. Saxe, Reg. No. 28,665; Charles F. Schill, Reg. No. 27,590; Richard L. Schwaab, Reg. No. 25,479; Arthur Schwartz, Reg. No. 22,115; Harold C. Wegner, Reg. No. 25,258.

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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